

Corps continues to implement VARQ flood control operations at Libby Dam in 2008

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Portland, Ore. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced this year's planned operations for Libby Dam would be a continuation of last year's VARQ flood control operations.

Col. Steven Miles, commander of the Northwestern Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, signed the decision document in December 2007.

The document says one of the Corps' primary considerations has been minimizing the risk to human life and safety while meeting other project purposes and responsibilities. The decision document goes on to say that Colonel Miles determined that implementing VARQ flood control operation and providing fish flows at Libby Dam in 2008 are in the public interest.

Along with strict VARQ flood control, an alternative to standard flood control, the Corps will operate Libby Dam to provide additional water releases in the spring for sturgeon, and in the summer for Columbia River salmon and steelhead. The likelihood of achieving reservoir refill, and consequently the volume available for summer fish flows, will be reduced compared to some previous years because of strict adherence to VARQ operating procedures.

The VARQ operating procedures allow for varying from the VARQ outflows on a short-term basis to protect human life, health and safety; avoid river stages higher than the 1,764-foot flood stage at Bonners Ferry; and comply with requirements of an International Joint Commission order addressing Libby Dam effects on Kootenay Lake in Canada.

The decision document addresses only 2008 operations at Libby Dam. The Corps is addressing available information to prepare a long-term decision on Libby Dam operations using VARQ flood control, but has not yet completed that process. The document is available at www.nws.usace.army.mil under Libby 2008 operations.

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